

Okaloosa County News Release

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Okaloosa County Encouraged to Take Energy Star Again This Year *National County Government Week May 3-9, 2009*

Okaloosa County is participating with other Florida counties to pledge to “Change the World” again. Last year, Okaloosa County finished second among counties the same size. In 2008, Okaloosa County saved 2,440,406 in greenhouse emissions. Visit www.energystar.gov and “Take the Energy Star Pledge.”

“We are encouraging citizens and employees to conserve energy through driving smarter and also to make their homes and businesses more energy efficient,” stated Commissioner John Jannazo. “We hope everyone will join us in the friendly competition with other counties.”

Okaloosa County has a Sustainability Committee of employees from various departments who work to educate and conserve water, energy and resources throughout its departments. Here are some of the things Okaloosa County is doing for sustainability:

- **Water and Sewer Dept.** gives away tablets to customers upon request, to check for leaking toilets. They also have indoor and outdoor water conservation kits while supplies last, for customers!
- **Facilities Maintenance** is retrofitting light fixtures with a more energy efficient device that uses 40%-60% less electricity, modifying hot water heaters to run more efficiently, installing older units with higher efficiency HVAC systems, installing programmable thermostats and more. Whenever new construction is replacing old or products are replaced, the best energy efficiency is evaluated for sustainability and savings. Facility Maintenance also reuse construction materials whenever possible, and actively encourage all employees to turn off lights in buildings, unplug phone chargers, etc.
- **Recycling/Solid Waste**, a division of **Public Works**, is very active in community recycling, to include community events, hazardous waste, mobile unit recycling and overall conservation.
- **Public Works** partners with municipalities, state and federal government to conserve resources and money wherever and whenever possible.
- **Fleet** implemented the “no idle” policy, encouraging employees to turn off ignition when not in use for more than 10 seconds. Additionally, employees are asked to practice good driving habits: inflating tires properly, consolidate trips, don’t accelerate or brake suddenly unless required. Fleet is reviewing alternative fuels, as well as mileage use on vehicles for a longer life. (No new vehicles have been purchased in the current budget year or are planned for next year, other than emergency vehicles.)
- Okaloosa County **Extension Office** assists residents and other departments with water conservation landscaping, conserving energy and money, as well as its numerous education outreach programs.

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